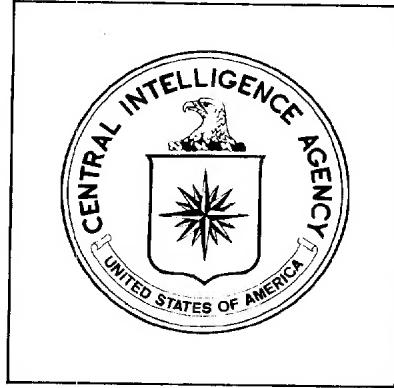


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STAFF NOTES:

Soviet Union Eastern Europe

DIA review(s) completed.

State Department review completed

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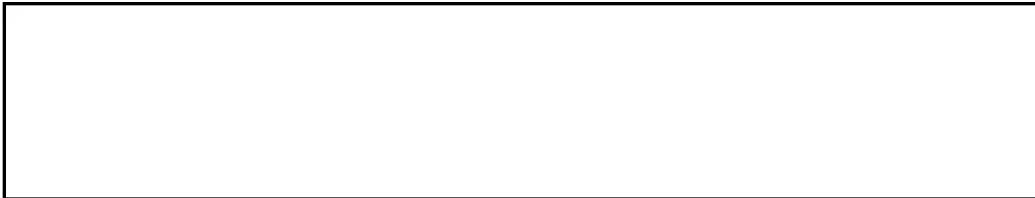
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Warsaw Pact Officials Meet in Moscow

The deputy foreign ministers of the Warsaw Pact states met in Moscow on January 29-30 for their first formal session since 1970.

A short statement on the gathering gave no information on the agenda, but the session probably started preparations for the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the surrender of Nazi Germany and for the Pact summit conference scheduled for mid-May in Warsaw to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Eastern alliance.

The deputy ministers may also have been informed about Soviet tactics for the European security and force reduction talks that have recently reconvened. It is, however, unlikely that they discussed major international questions. Both the Polish and East German foreign ministers were recently called to Moscow to review foreign policy issues.

The meeting was attended by Soviet deputy foreign minister Nikolay Firyubin, who is also Secretary General of the Pact's top-level Political Consultative Committee. It is unclear whether he chaired the meeting.

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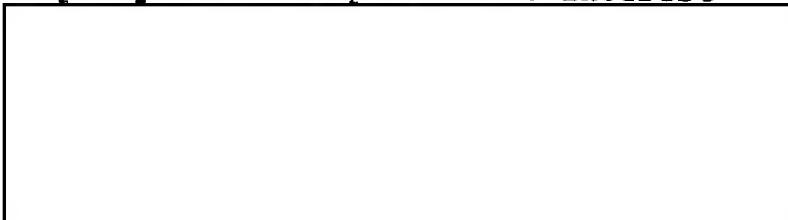
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Shcherbitsky, Rashidov, and Romanov in *Pravda*

While Brezhnev continues to receive a good press, despite his absence from public life, lower ranking leaders are being given varied treatment.

V. V. Shcherbitsky, Politburo member and first secretary of the Ukraine, and Sh. R. Rashidov, Politburo candidate member and first secretary of Uzbekistan, have appeared in *Pravda* this month in an unfavorable light. *Pravda* reported on January 11 and 26 that it had received replies from these leaders acknowledging the correctness of earlier critical articles, advising that republic party organizations had discussed the articles, and promising rectifying actions. In both cases, *Pravda* omitted the two leaders' Politburo titles, presumably in order not to reflect badly on that august body.

On the other hand, *Pravda* on January 30 carried an article by G. V. Romanov, Politburo candidate member and first secretary of Leningrad Oblast, touting the oblast's success in fulfilling the plan goals for 1974. He described his oblast's progress in improving the education and training system so that it can better serve the requirements of industry. With no great modesty, he added that Leningrad's successes in this approach to the key labor considerations of production are the result of the Leningrad party leadership's direct interest and influence.



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A Frenchman's View of Kulikov

The newly arrived French military attache in Moscow recently met with Soviet Chief of Staff Kulikov, and found him cordial and apparently well in command of the situation. Exuding an air of self-confidence, Kulikov talked of the need for a strong military organization as the only sure guarantor of peace. He bragged that the Soviet army, unlike other unnamed forces, had never been on foreign soil except as a consequence of wars started by imperialists. Kulikov did not mention the US or detente during their conversation. As would be expected, he praised the Soviet's current nationwide campaign to publicize the 30th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe.

Saying that he was just beginning to get his feet on the ground after four years as chief of staff, Kulikov criticized the French for their alleged custom of changing defense ministers every two years. To the French attache's rejoinder that recent changes in this position have been caused by the ill health of the incumbents, Kulikov said that the French ministers should play tennis every morning as does Soviet Defense Minister Grechko. This remark, although apparently offhand, may have been intended to make the point that Grechko, despite his 71 years, is still in excellent health and in full command of the military.

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Yugoslavia Signs Trade Accord with USSR

A recently signed protocol between Yugoslavia and the USSR calls for an increase in mutual trade from \$1.4 billion in 1974 to \$1.9 billion in 1975. By the end of last year, the USSR had replaced Italy as Yugoslavia's second largest trading partner. West Germany is still Belgrade's leading partner, and almost three fourths of Yugoslavia's trade is with the West.

The trade expansion this year will probably involve a heavy use of Soviet credits extended to Belgrade in 1972. Less than \$100 million of the \$540 million in credits have been drawn thus far, and the Soviets will probably extend an additional \$400 million for the 1976-80 period.

Higher prices for Soviet oil shipments, which contributed substantially to the increase in the value of trade in 1974, probably will not be a factor this year. Belgrade already has announced that oil purchases from the USSR will be held to 2 million tons, down from 2.5 million tons in 1974. Belgrade has arranged to import 4.5 million tons of Iraqi oil this year.

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